

critical digest



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This Week in NYC

The Biltmore Theatre, W 47 St, which has been used by CBS-TV for the past ten years, will be modernized and enlarged to a 1120 seat playhouse by new owner David Coogan, co-producer of A Raisin in the Sun who bought theatre from Irving Maidman for a reported \$850,000. He will spend \$150,000 to refurbish it, following designs of David Hays, and it will be ready for Oct use. With this return of another playhouse from TV, 35 Broadway theatres will be available next season.

Plays

NYC power failure Jun 13 cancelled- My Fair Lady, Mary Mary, and Bye Bye Birdie and cut air-conditioning at all other shows. Billy Barnes People premiere was delayed 40 minutes until a borrowed generator was installed. Return of the use of air conditioning equipment at 9 30 PM was greeted by applause from all shirt-sleeved audiences.

Pal Joey posted notice for Jun 25 due to failure to sell out low priced seats at City Center... The Miracle Worker closes Jul 1... Sail Away musical by Noel Coward due Oct 3 at Broadhurst... Cradle and All revised version of Sumner Arthur Long's comedy to be presented Oct 9 by Irving Cooper-Daniel Hollywood... Purile Victorious a new play by Ossie Davis to be presented in Oct by Philip Rose with Davis and Ruby Dee (Mrs.D.), directed by Howard da Silva... Kicks & Co to be directed by Vinette Carroll... Sunday in NY new comedy by Norman Krasna to be directed by Garson Kanin, due in Nov at Cort... From the Second City Chicago cabaret-theatre revue to be brought to NYC in Oct by Max Liebman-Bernard Sahlins, by and with Howard Alk, Severn Darden, Andrew Duncan, Barbara Harris... Little Me musical version of Patrick Dennis novel by Neil Simon to star Sid Caesar in multiple role in Feuer-Martin production due in fall.

NYC Calendar

Stratford, Ontario, Shakespeare Festival- Coriolanus- 6/19 Directed by Michael Langham with Paul Scofield, Douglas Campbell... Henry VIII-6/20 -Directed by George McCowan with Douglas Rain, Douglas Campbell, Kate Reid... Love's Labour's Lost-6/21. Directed by Michael Langham with Paul Scofield, John Colicos.

Paradise Island- Jones Beach, NY, Marine Theatre- 6/22 Guy Lombardo presents a Hawaiian musical fantasy with book, music, lyrics by Carmen Lombardo & John Jacob Loeb directed by June Taylor & Frances Swann with Elaine Malbin, Arthur Treacher, William Gaxton.

Players

James Mitchell returned to evening performances of Carnival after three week illness, with understudy George Marcy continuing at matinees... Russ Brown subbing for Howard da Silva, Fiorillo! during latter's three week vacation... Zero Mostel to switch to "Beringer" role originated by Eli Wallach, Rhinoceros, if show returns to NYC in fall... Bonnie Scott who appeared briefly in Vintage '60 at start of this season to be featured in How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying musical in fall... Alan Bunce to be featured in A Cook for Mr. General.

Broadway Business

Variety reports mid-June rally with increases at most and four sell-outs--Carnival, Mary Mary, Camelot, Sound of Music.

Special Events

June 20 named "American Theatre Day in NYC" by Mayor Wagner in honor of returned Theatre Guild American Repertory Company... Robert Dowling, City Investing Corp, to be given Mary MacArthur Memorial Award Jun 27 at Plaza Hotel dinner.

Off Broadway

Little Mary Sunshine to move Jun 27 from Orpheum to Players... Henrietta Storm to portray sole character in Hector and Joseph Poncecki and Paul Giovanni make up complete cast of West of the Moon, to be presented Jun 27 at New Playwrights Theatre, Lee Paton director.

Lilo de Paris revue starring Lilo to be presented Jun 5 at Mayfair by Irving Maidman-Monte Proser... Mourning Becomes Electra revival at Phoenix in fall may be directed by Jose Quintero... Saroyan's 1942 twin-bill of Across the Board on Tomorrow Morning and Talking to You to be revived in fall by Shelley & Barry Gorden, directed by Arthur Storch... Fly Blackbird Los Angeles musical comedy satire on desegregation by C, B Jackson & James Hatch, teachers at UCLA, currently at Metro Theatre, L.A. to be presented in NYC in fall.

Theatre TV Notes

CBS-TV America's Music to present program on Florenz Ziegfeld in the fall.

Theatre Book Notes

Random House to publish text of A Far Country... Theatre Arts Books to publish paperback edition of London Play The Long and the Short and the Tall.

Theatre Film Notes

The Zoo Story film to feature George Maharis... Stephen Boyd, Jackie Gleason, Doris Day signed for Jumbo film... Lucille Ball and Bob Hope to star in film of Critic's Choice... The Breaking Wall film of Off Broadway play to be made by and with Tina Louise.

Play Diary

The Voice of the Turtle- 41st St 6/27... 3 American Plays- New Playwrights Theatre 6/27.

DIGESTS OF CURRENT NYC THEATRE REVIEWS

Red Eye of Love- Living Theatre (530-6th Av)
6/12. 3 pro- Herald Tribune, Post, Journal American
and 2 con- Times, World Telegram & Sun- filed on
new play by Arnold Weinstein, presented by John Wulp-
Sam Cohn, directed by Wulp with Jane Romano, George
Latchford, Michael Vale. Affirmative voters enjoyed
avant garde comedy by new writer with praise shared
by director and cast, while negative voters were mild
Pro side headed by Kerr, Herald Tribune, who enjoyed
residual giddiness and genuine flare for wry nonsense
of author that would do credit to the best of our most
adult comic strips. Directed to a polished perfection
and with three amusing portraits, Herald Tribune man
cheered. Herridge, Post, approved of off-beat avant
garde play with laughs, slapstick with one surprise irr-
relevancy after another; the direction witty and the cast
excellent in inspired nonsense. McClain, Journal Am-
erican, applauded new comedy which works most of
the time, the humor mad and meaningless with an in-
gratiating young cast who will defy you to keep a strai-
ght face, for the most part thoroughly dizzy and delight-
ful small evening. Con side headed by Esterow, Times,
who looked forward to future work of talented writer ,
but who thought he missed this time because he too oft-
en wandered off in all directions. The writer here need-
ed more discipline and less disorder, Times man said,
Aston, WTS, okayed the 12 competent comics in cast,
but thought script failed to provide zinging finish the
lines needed.

A Fig Leaf in her Bonnet-Gramercy Arts(138 E 27)
6/14. 3 pro- Post, Journal American, World Telegram &
sun- and 4 con- Times, Herald Tribune, News, Mirror -
filed on new play by Jesse Torn about GBS and Mrs Camp-
bell, staged by Basil Langton with Claudia Morgan, Hend-
erson Forsythe, Abby Lewis. Afternoon reviewers praised
literate fictional version of famed romance and production,
while morning reviewers vetoed it as unbelievable and very
poorly done. Herridge, Post, recommended literate and
keenly perceptive drama, with all characters credible and
knowingly drawn, admirably played, stimulating fun. O'Con-
ner, Journal American, lauded interesting triangle that pro-
vided a lively battle of wits with author's dialogue frequent-
ly sparkling as GBS himself, well written and well- acted.
Aston, WTS, found first play delightfully entertaining on a
fascinating subject. Negative majority leader Gelb, Times,
panned play as unbelievable and unfunny and all of cast ex-
cept Abby Lewis for not knowing lines and dropping props.
Kerr, Herald Tribune, thought the research moments from
the actual letters and plays give the evening its occasion-
al liveliness, otherwise it is an invasion of privacy and un-
believable. Davis, News, okayed only the players in the un-
believable play that made GBS look silly. Coleman, Mirror,
found it difficult to accept GBS as the great lover, and in ad-
dition thought the dialogue stiff and the characterizations too
stocky.



Billy Barnes People- Royale 6/14. 1 pro- World
Telegram & Sun- and 6 con- filed on new musical revue
presented by John Pool, sketches and direction by Bob
Rodgers, music and lyrics by Billy Barnes with Ken Berry,
Jackie Joseph, Joyce Jameson, Patti Regan, Jo Anne Wor-
ley, Dick Patterson, Jack Grinnage. West coast cast just
concluded 24 week run at Las Palmas Theatre, Los Ange-
les. Majority panned material as dull and unfunny with
only Ken Berry's song and dance numbers winning any
real praise. Sole pro voter Aston, WTS, enjoyed stylish
spoof of our common habits done by cast bursting with tal-
ent and enthusiasm, he also thought Berry should have
been given more dance numbers. Violent pan notice from
Taubman, Times, marked it a cheap, raucous affair that if
it is regarded as "entertainment" in Calif a lot of what is
wrong with the stuff of dreams manufactured out there be-
comes unmistakably clear. Kerr, Herald Tribune, also
harshly panned show which simply neglected to write any
lyrics or devise any blackouts capable of taking care of
themselves, leaving cast with nothing to do but mug. Chap-
man, News, applauded heroic audience who sat through a
40 minute wait the night of the power-failure, saw the show
without any air-conditioning and then gave it everything it
had in the way of attention and applause. As for the show
itself News aisle-sitter found it too cute, too mannered
and too collegiate. Coleman, Mirror, in a mild tone did
find some amusing spots and a versatile cast who know
what to do with good material. Thus it was too bad, Mir-
ror man said, they don't often have it. Herridge, Post,
thought songs likeable, cast talented and hardworking, but
the satire too gentle and the sketches unprovocative. Mc-
Clain, Journal American, panned inept, embarrassing char-
ade, pretentious. It was not the heat-it was the stupidity,
summed Journal American critic.



THEATRE RECORD COMMENTS

Donnybrook! original cast album (Kapp) recomm-
ended by Watt, News, as a very pleasant job. Tuneful mel-
odies and deft lyrics are not precisely arresting for the
most part, but they are uniformly professional, obviously
the work of a craftsman and reveal a somewhat rare qual-
ity in this flamboyant field that is warm and appealing.

Carnival original cast album (MGM) should
soothe the frustrations and fractures of those who will
never see the show in its pristine form, raves Aston,
World Telegram & Sun. Take before meals and on re-
tiring to show your belly how good you can be, critic
concludes.

Young Abe Lincoln original cast album (Golden
Books) okayed by Mitgang, Times, as a bright way for a
youngster to absorb history. Though one should not look
too closely at the liberties taken with historical facts .
...Sometime Again an original children's musical by
Evelyn Lohoefer (Washington Records) also recommend-
ed by Times reviewer for its refreshing nonsense and
nice music.



GREEN
ROOM
DEPARTMENT



PROS & CONS BY TMK

CURING LEGIT... Suggestions to help cure Broadway's theatre plight forwarded by Taubman, Times, as a result of the paper's week-long economic survey include--cut production costs, cut operating costs, cut ticket prices, bring back lost audiences, develop new audiences, establish a central theatre ticket agency, modernize old theatres, offer tax relief, cultivate statesmanship among producers, build a general theatre fund and encourage new creative talent. Theatre fund of 1% from hit productions could be used on fellowships for promising writers, presentation of difficult, significant works, and special student performances... Cultural renewal project proposed by builder Joel Schenker would erect a two block wide midtown living-shopping-theatre area with twelve theatres located in one building. This would include the proposed new homes of Theatre Guild, American Theatre Wing, ANTA, etc, he told Crosby, Herald Tribune.

COLUMN TIPS... Carnival tickets being scalped at \$100 a pair, hears Wilson, Post... Johnny Burke wants to do musical based on Shaw's Caesar and Cleopatra, notes Coleman, Mirror.

GRIFFITH-KAUFMAN OBITS... Bobby Griffith was a kind and considerate showman, his genuine warmth and friendliness will be missed, states Sullivan, News... George S Kaufman, who was drama editor of NY Times 1917-1930, remembered by Atkinson, Times, for giving the drama staff his knowledge, honesty, wit and unfailing goodwill.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... Broadway should some how have kept its intelligent, serious theatre going long enough for the summer audience of teachers from around the country to enjoy it, chides Chapman, News... Coleman, Mirror, will pay the expenses of organizing a small, tightly knit democratically elected committee representing all phases of show business with power to act swiftly.

30 YEAR GARDE... Noontide written thirty years ago sounds in quite a few respect decidedly more up to the minute than a couple of Broadway offerings put on paper in the past few months, concludes Kerr, Herald Tribune.

DRAMA MAIL BOX... City Center pros & cons voiced in Herald Tribune drama mail. Producer Robert Fryer applauds work of Jean Dalrymple who is able to bring to the public great plays which should be seen at prices Broadway cannot afford to operate at. She has great imagination, taste and seeks the best talent in every department... Another Herald Tribune reader panned "cheap" theatre that has resulted from critics padding their reviews with phony accolades to avoid rumpling Dalrymple and crumbling the monument to "cheap" prices.

THEATRE BOOK COMMENTS... "How to Break Into the Theatre" by Charlotte Harmon recommended by Davis, News for its valuable inside info for youngsters bent on show business careers.

The Billy Barnes People is a noisy, dull collection of drawn out sketches with illustrated songs that is never clever, amusing and/or entertaining. Except for the nice, quiet song and dance renditions by talented Ken Berry, the rest of the lack-lustre material is shouted through the ear-splitting loudspeaker system. The major fault of the the revue is the sin of all such warm weather tries that mistake merely mentioning of proper names in the news for forthright comment. It can be compared to Mort Sahl reading a dull phone-book and not commenting on the names.

\$1.95 is the price of the top Pal Joey balcony seats for the funny, fabulous revival at the City Center, but last week only six of the hundreds of seats available were sold. As a result the musical will close Jun 25 instead of running to Jul 2 as planned on the basis of the rave notices. The diverse committees considering long range plans to solve theatre problems had better adjourn quickly. The immediate problem is how to get people, any people, to go to see the best musical show in town at the lowest prices of any entertainment in town. The orchestra is selling out nightly at the City Center, but the empty balconies can and will kill the production. Perhaps the show should be advertised as a low-priced Broadway movie, and fans will flock in by the thousands!

That show business legend that says something or other about the show must go on somehow forgot to mention AC current. As a result the three Broadway playhouses that did not have DC current did not go on the night of NYC's power failure. Proving that show business traditions, like producer-union contracts, must be iron-bound to cover every and all emergencies.

Spartan not Utopian means seem the best, most immediate and secure cures for theatre. In a week that many good-intentioned, but unrealistic, suggestions for correcting theatre abuses were made, the hard news was about two producers who are literally going to build their own theatres. The return of the Biltmore raises to 35 the number of available playhouses for next season, though it is safe to guess that producer-owner David Cogan will have first call on his own new theatre. Ben Segal also is a Do-It-Yourself producer. He will head a corporation which will set up a three theatre unit at Wallingford, Conn which will provide his Oakdale Musical Theatre with an indoor home and also provide the New Haven area with both a large playhouse for road shows and a smaller one that sounds ideal for Off Broadway units.

New Shubert air-conditioning installed without fanfare is comfortable, silent and efficient. It should some day in the rosy future allow new productions to play and to open all year round.



OUTER
BROADWAY
THEATRE
LETTER

College Theatre

Fairleigh-Dickenson Univ, Teaneck, NJ, Pegasus Players to present The Whip and The Lost Voice by Noma Rubel, director, at 15 German universities this summer... Nutmeg Theatre, Univ of Conn, Storrs, opens summer season Jun 27 with Auntie Mame... NYU and NY Public Library theatre collections to share material left by late Chamberlain & Lyman Brown.

9th Annual Samuel French National Collegiate Playwriting Contest winners announced. Take Care Y'Self by Raymond Carver, Yale Univ, won \$350 first prize for full length plays, and Lullaby by W A Clark, Princeton Univ, and Long Island Abroad by Robert J. Myers tied for first place in the short play competition and will share first and second prize money totalling \$300.

ANTA

Margaret Webster has consented to head an ANTA sponsored repertory theatre project for a period of three years. Discussions will be held in fall with prospects from various cities.

New Playhouses

\$8 million cultural center featuring three theatres will be constructed at Wallingford, Conn. Ben Segal, producer of Oakdale Musical Theatre, Wallingford, announced, 3000 seat theatre in the round will be used by Segal starting in summer 1964 replacing his current tent operation. 2500 seat proscenium theatre to be available for road shows and pre-Broadway tryouts, and 750 seat theatre for experimental plays and art pictures.

Award Dept

Too Soon for December a new comedy by Raymond Marschalk won \$150 award in 5th H K Smith, Sr Memorial Playwriting Contest, Little Theatre of Jacksonville, Fla.

Summer Playhouses

Phoenicia, NY, Playhouse to be run this season by Ivor Balding starting Jul 1 with Once in a Lifetime, directed by Peter Bogdanovich. This production and a tryout of a new play directed by Bill Hickey will be presented Off Broadway in the fall.

Corning, NY, Summer Theatre opens 11th season Jun 23 with West Side Story, directed by Richard Stuart Flusser... Big Fish, Little Fish to be presented Jun 27 at Woodstock, NY, Playhouse... Journey to the Day a new play by Roger Hirson to be tried out by Fred Coe-Arthur Cantor Aug 28 at Westport, Conn, Country Playhouse... Fallen Angels with Ann B. Davis to be presented for three weeks at Fred Miller Theatre, Milwaukee Jun 20.

Road Shows

Belle Flower, understudy for Joan Blondell, Bye Bye Birdie, became the talk of Los Angeles, when she subbed for several days, reports Kilgallen, Journal American. Equity-AGVA dispute over jurisdiction of Los Vegas tabloid editions of NYC musicals may go to 4 A arbitration.

Theatre Confabs

National Community Theatre Centre sessions Jun 20-Jul 14 at Univ of Wisconsin, Madison... National Catholic Theatre Conference will hold 25th convention Aug 23-26 at NYC Statler-Hilton and Sheraton-Atlantic.

London

Gaiety Theatre to be new name of Saville Theatre bought by Bernard Delfont. Next attraction is Victor Borge's Comedy in Music Jul 3... Mermaid Theatre now offering theatre ticket and dinner for \$2.94... New one man Yves Montand show to open in London in Oct prior to NY at Christmas.

Africa

A Touch of the Poet to be directed by Margaret Webster at South African National Theatre Organization, Pretoria under State Dept. project. She will also give lectures and teach theatre technique throughout Africa to Sept.

Latin America

National Cervantes Theatre, Buenos Aires, destroyed by fire, together with most of the scenery and equipment of Jean Louis Barrault's Repertory Company... The Blacks to be presented in Mexico City by Geraldine Lust... Arnold Moss to open State Dept backed tour Jun 19 at Port au Prince, Haiti. He will also stage King Lear in Guatemala City and The Tempest in Kingston, Jamaica using local native costumes and music... Nydia Westman joined Actors Studio group readying tour.

Europe

Epidaurus, Greece, 8th Drama Festival opened at 2300 year old outdoor stadium seating 14,000 with an ancient Greek language version of Electra... HIM by e.e. cummings to be presented at Spoleto, Italy, Festival with Mike Nicols and Phyllis Newman.

Current Road Tours

Bye Bye Birdie- Philharmonic, Los Angeles 6/5

Fiorello-Queen Elizabeth, Vancouver- 6/21

Flower Drum Song- Nixon, Pittsburgh 6/19

Gypsy- Shubert, Chicago 5/29

Majority of One- Geary, San Francisco 6/5

Merry Widow- Curran, San Francisco 6/5

Miracle Worker- Erlanger Chicago 4/24

Music Man-National, Washington, DC 6/12



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